

# Questionnaire for Candidates for Oakland City Council

## BASIC CANDIDATE INFORMATION

1. Name as it will appear on the ballot: Jennifer S. Pae
2. Office sought (include office, jurisdiction, position/district number): Oakland City Council, District 2
3. What is your current occupation or elected office? Non-Profit Executive
4. Are you the incumbent? No
5. How long have you resided in this district and city? Since 2007

## CAMPAIGN CONTACTS

Campaign Name:	Jennifer Pae for 2010 Oakland City Council
Address:	484 Lake Park Ave #545
City, State, Zip:	Oakland, CA 94610
Name of staff contact:	Tanzila "Taz" Ahmed
Campaign Phone:	510-852-9728
Campaign Fax:	415-442-0940
Campaign E-mail:	vote@jenniferpae.com
Campaign Website:	www.jenniferpae.com
FPPC#	1326068

## **OUR ISSUES (18-35 year olds)**

Please answer the first six questions in 250 words or less

1. What are your top three priorities if you are elected to the City Council?

Oakland is in the midst of an economic and social crisis. This election is about investing in Oakland's future and changing the discourse that has prevented our city from moving forward. Our main policy priorities include:

- Invest In Our Local Economy. Implement a jobs and economic development plan that: (a) best leverages federal dollars to benefit our community, (b) encourages fiscally and socially responsible lending and investments in our local workforce economy, and (c) strengthens Oakland's businesses, homeowners, and entrepreneurs.
- Invest In Our Young People. Strengthen collaborative partnership with the School District to address high truancy and low graduation rates for our young people.
- Invest In Public Safety. Prioritize public safety by: (a) addressing the root causes of crime by instituting a multi-strategy of violence prevention, intervention, and enforcement, and (b) ensuring a properly staffed, responsive, and accountable Police Department.

Right now Oakland voters are on edge. They see a city government that has lost touch with its people. It is time to invest in Oakland by bringing in new leadership and voices to City Hall. Together, we must *invest* in the prosperity of Oakland and make local government work effectively for our families, youth, and seniors. Our policy priorities must strengthen our community - when our diverse community succeeds, we all succeed.

2. Oakland is facing a tremendous budget crisis. This July the City Council voted to lay off some police officers to address the budget crisis. What was or would have been your position on this issue as a city council member, and what other measures do you think the city can and should take to deal with the massive budget deficit?

We must solve our budget crisis. The City needs to address its budget in a fundamentally different way; otherwise, we will continue to be in a position to have to decide to lay off 80 police officers or more, rather than getting at the systemic budget deficits. The City's budget is currently operating in a vacuum and does not provide any solutions for the continued deficits we will be facing due to these structural barriers. We will be having the same budget conversations year after year, unless we address the structural flaws in the City budget.

We need to implement a vision of smart, long-term growth that includes:

- Fixing our structural deficits to balance the budget's spending and revenue,
- Support our local businesses through successful business development and retention,
- Develop an aggressive business recruitment strategy to come to Oakland, and
- Improve on our workforce development strategies to prepare our residence for new and emerging industries.

There is no time like the present to implement this vision. There are billions of federal stimulus dollars available to cities like Oakland that have smart ideas for our future. We must mandate Oakland development to keep businesses and jobs in Oakland. We must have a concrete comprehensive plan for how to generate revenue for the long term.

Most importantly, by supporting our local workforce, through ground breaking green jobs, the biotech and health industry, and industrial jobs with a career ladder, we have the ability to invest in the growth of our local workforce and economy. This can best be implemented by promoting

job training centers partnered with the neighborhoods, businesses, and community groups to support those most in need.

Part of the solution is breaking through the City's budget vacuum and developing a comprehensive plan that partners with the immense amount of talent and skills in Oakland's non-profit sector and business community. They are part of the solution.

Furthermore, by encouraging fiscally and socially responsible lending and investments in our local economy, we can strengthen Oakland's businesses, homeowners, and entrepreneurs. It is imperative the City audit and collect all available revenue. An opportunity is available to secure community reinvestment by regulating local check cashing, money transfers, and pay day loans.

3. What are your positions on the parcel tax (Measure X) and the police staffing requirements (Measure Y) on the November ballot?

This is another example of the lack of leadership, political will, and vision to fix our current budget constraints. Voters are now asked to pay more this November, not for more services, but to get us to the level of services we were at before. This does not get at the root cause of the budget deficit, and instead, is a short term fix and band-aid for a larger systemic problem within the budget. The parcel tax requires a 2/3rds majority, and as I talk to voters in my district while knocking on doors, it is clear people are not willing to pay more. Furthermore, the City Council has made an agreement with the Oakland Police Officers Association for their members to start paying into their pension after the measure passes. This does not solve the issue that OPOA is currently the only City employees that do not pay into their pensions or the challenges with the public safety budget within the General Fund, which accounts for 72%.

As a member of the Oakland Community Policing Advisory Board, I see firsthand the failure in implementing Measure Y as it was passed by the voters. We are now being asked to "fix" the measure when it was passed with specific requirements that unfortunately are not being met by the City. There is no guarantee that the City will abide by the new requirements of Measure Y, however, our hands are tied because we need the measure to support public safety in Oakland, but there is a lack of trust and faith that it will be fully implemented with the new "fix."

4. Young adults and students are facing a terrible job market. What would you do as a city councilmember to fight for sustainable and well-paying jobs for all of Oakland's residents, but especially young people?

The City's charter strictly limits the role that the City may take in Oakland's educational system. However, the City must prioritize solving Oakland's high truancy rate and low graduation rates and build a strong partnership so we can educate and train our young people for the job market. We can no longer turn our backs on thousands of habitually truant students who are being failed by California's broken educational system and the highest unemployment rates are for young people in Oakland. We can chart a new course by working together and creating a true partnership with the City of Oakland, the School District, community groups, and the business sector to build a pipeline for success that prepares our young people for college and/or careers. To keep the doors of opportunity open, we must strengthen student retention programs and centers that effectively target our most vulnerable communities.

In addition, I would ask the business community and nonprofit organizations to work with the city to create a stronger youth employment program similar to the one they have in San Francisco called the Mayor's Office of Youth Employment and Enrichment Program, where youth have an opportunity to be placed in part time jobs.

5. Violence has plagued the city of Oakland for too long. Too often the victims and perpetrators of crime are young people, and the crime prevention efforts do not address

the root causes of violence in our community. What steps would you take to increase public safety throughout Oakland?

Recent violence in our community highlights the need for us to work together as a community. From developing smart re-entry programs and services so that Oakland's recidivism rates do not continue to climb to implementing the county juvenile justice court so a true restorative justice model for our youth gets them back on track, there are many methods to creating safe public spaces, promoting safer streets, and ensuring a good quality of life for our everyone.

Crime is expensive. In order to provide a safe and sustainable future for Oakland, it is critical to address and solve the root causes of crime. We cannot rely on only one strategy to make our neighborhoods safe. It is vital to address public safety from multiple angles, including providing good jobs and good schools. One example is fixing Measure Y which supports successful violence prevention and intervention programs, so that it is fully implemented and sets out to accomplish its main intent.

We must have a properly staffed, responsive, and accountable Police Department. Most recently, there have been major debates and layoffs regarding police staffing levels and the elimination of community policing services. The violence in our community isn't caused by one person, one city agency, or one failure. The unacceptable violence in our community highlights the need for us to work together. We must reach out to all of the talented members of our community to develop a sustainable model for community policing.

6. Oakland has a Transit First policy. What would you do implement this policy and encourage transit, bicycling, and walking for city residents? What would you do to decrease car usage and increase alternative transit use by city employees?

For many years, Oakland has struggled to implement a strong strategic plan for land use and zoning. It is important that these plans are consistent with green sustainable development that provides good housing and reliable transit. To build a more sustainable Oakland, it is vital to invest in accessible public transportation, pedestrian and bicycle friendly streets, and reasonable parking solutions so we reduce greenhouse emissions and traffic congestion, while supporting our local businesses. Furthermore, our streets should be well lit and maintained while Lake Merritt is kept clean to create a healthy and livable environment.

Most immediately, the Lake Merritt BART Development in District 2 is a tremendous opportunity to support local businesses, provide local job opportunities, expand public transportation, and building a safe community for our neighborhood.

By building a smart long term strategic plan for land use, we can better finance City projects through multi-jurisdictional partnerships. Whether it's building a retail district or a health clinic, we have the responsibility to build a City that we can all be proud of and that will last for decades to come.

7. Have you collaborated with young adults in your community work in the past (list specific examples)? How are young adults involved in your campaign? How will you continue to involve young activists in your work after you are elected? Please be specific.

Most definitely! My commitment to our generation of young people is evident at all levels of the campaign. From our Campaign Manager, who was a fellow trainer for Campus Camp Wellstone to our Super Volunteers, many of whom are first time volunteers for a local race and are also young democrats, we have young adults heavily involved in leadership roles in our grassroots campaign. To date, we have over 350 donors that have contributed to the campaign, 80% have given at \$100 or less and many are young adults. We have organized young professionals and students to be involved in the campaign as volunteers and donors.

I will continue to involve young activists after the election to further develop the next generation of leaders. I plan to implement an internship and fellowship program to engage students and young people in local government. Furthermore, I will work with each of the schools in the district to better support their needs and build a stronger partnership to solve our low graduation rates and high truancy rates. My mission is for students to be college and career ready and I am dedicated to work with young people to help develop solutions for their own community.

## **ACCOMPLISHMENTS FOR YOUNG ADULTS**

*Please describe in detail at least three of your accomplishments that have improved the lives of young adults. These examples should illustrate skills and capabilities that apply to the office you are seeking. These accomplishments may have occurred at any time in your personal, professional, or public life.*

My personal and professional career has revolved around promoting the interests of young people in the political arena. I am passionate about this because as part of the Millennial Generation, we have a unique outlook, the creative skills and energy to build a stronger future for our community.

As the President and Executive Director of the United States Student Association based in Washington D.C., I negotiated federal policies with Members of Congress and the Department of Education regarding financial aid reform, including the student loan industry. I testified before the U.S. Senate regarding the private loan industry and was appointed as the primary student negotiator for the negotiated rulemaking student loan committee due to the scandals within the private loan industry. As the chief spokesperson for the organization, I had the opportunity to speak to the media and gain national support for student issues', including opposition to the rising debt of students. It was exciting to see President Obama sign into law national health care reform, but in addition, the student loan reform was added as an amendment and also signed into law.

Furthermore, as a trainer for Campus Camp Wellstone, I had the privilege of training students across the country in electoral and issue based organizing. I became a community organizer because of the principles of grassroots organizing – to make people aware of their own power, to alter the relations of power, and make concrete improvements in people's lives. I believe it is our duty and responsibility to bring more people into the process, especially young people, to win campaigns and implement policies that will be in effect for generations to come.

As the Project Director at PowerPAC, I continued my work with undocumented "AB540" students from the national level at the U.S. Student Association to the state level by working on the California DREAM Act which is a state legislative proposal that allows U.S. citizens and undocumented "AB 540" students to apply for financial aid at California public colleges and universities *without* the use of the Federal Application for Student Aid (FAFSA). I organized a statewide coalition to host press events, rallies, and educational events to pass the CA DREAM Act. Furthermore, I trained and mentored students whose lives and futures were on the line because of their immigration status.

## **EXPERIENCE**

*Please list or describe your current and past activities in the community in which you have acquired skills that relate to the office you seek. Include your role in the activity and the year(s) in which you were involved. Involvement consists of many areas such as family, neighborhood, community, employment, or public life. Please explain how your experience would make you an effective advocate for young adults as an office holder. You may attach a resume and/or a list of endorsers here.*

I bring a different approach to City Hall. I have been a community organizer and public servant at the local, state, and national levels and understand the importance of working together and creating strong partnerships to solve our most pressing issues.

As the President and Executive Director of the United States Students Association from 2005-2007, I was responsible for overseeing eleven staff and budgets totaling over a \$1 million. Furthermore, I had the opportunity to facilitate a long-term strategic planning process to build a more sustainable organization. It was also my responsibility to negotiate federal policies with the Department of Education and members of Congress while serving on numerous boards and civil rights coalitions.

As a current member of the Oakland Community Policing Advisory Board, I know the intricate details of what it would take to build a safer Oakland for everyone. I have worked with the faith community and the Mayor's office to host a Peace Conference, partnered with local merchants to create safe streets by through community events, and supported neighborhood groups to advocate for community policing.

My approach to elected office is from a community perspective and a collaborative approach that will proactively engage various sectors of Oakland – businesses, nonprofits, faith based communities, and young people into the decision making process in local government. It is important to build consensus and have good faith negotiations when implementing policies and I represent a new generation of leadership with the ability to bring these skills to City Hall.

I know and understand the urgent situation that the City of Oakland finds itself. We need to invest in our businesses, our workforce, and our young people in order for our communities to succeed. I was given the opportunity to be the first in my family to graduate college and this laid the foundation for my commitment to public service. We, as a community, also have a duty and responsibility to invest in ourselves to help meet our full potential. When our community succeeds, we all succeed. Now is our time.

My motivation and drive comes from my family's experience. My maternal grandparents came to this country just 40 years ago to reach their dreams not only for themselves but to invest in their children. My grandfather was a mechanic and my grandmother worked at a Del Monte cannery all the while raising five children. Although they could not speak the language they knew that their children and their children's' children would succeed in this country.

My mother is the single most important reason that I am running for office. I grew up watching my mother, a single first-generation immigrant who raised two children while working and studying to become a nurse, demonstrate what hard work and perseverance can create. And I seek your endorsement by living up to her legacy of hard work and perseverance and plan to bring these values to our City Council.